SANTA CLARA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT

GOLD STREET EDUCATIONAL CENTER
PLANNING STUDY REPORT

Project No. 30154028

Prepared by:

Bal Ganjoo, P.E., Senior Project Manager

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JUNE 2008

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June 2008

The Planning Study Report has been prepared by the undersigned, who hereby certifies that he is a Registered Civil Engineer in the State of California.



Bal Ganjoo, RCE No. C69320, Expiration Date: June 2010

Gold Street Educational Center
Planning Study Report

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The community of Alviso is located along the edge of South San Francisco Bay, seven miles northwest of downtown San Jose. The Lower Guadalupe River Flood Protection Project (LGRP), constructed by the Santa Clara Valley Water District (District) between April 2003 and December 2004, increased the channel's capacity to convey stormwater runoff up to a 1 percent (100-year) flood event. In addition to improving flood protection, the project's purpose included protecting endangered species, preserving fish and migratory bird habitat, and allowing for open-space recreation.

The LGRP's channel improvements extended from the Alviso County Marina upstream to Interstate 880 (I-880) and included: construction of floodwalls or raising of levees along the riverbanks; replacement of the Highway 237 eastbound bridge; modifications to storm drain outfalls; improvement and construction of maintenance roads and undercrossings; construction of an overflow weir to divert high flows into the Pond A5-A6-A7-A8 complex; and construction of grade control weirs (to provide for gradual drops in the stream elevation).

As part of the LGRP project formulation and in compliance with Board Ends Policy E-3.2.1[1], staff identified and presented to the Board several environmental enhancement opportunities. Developing an educational center on a 0.5-acre parcel owned by the State Lands Commission along Gold Street and adjacent to the Guadalupe River, was one enhancement presented to the Board in November 2002. On July 8, 2003, the Board directed staff to initiate a new capital project for this proposed enhancement.

Project Objectives

The following project objectives were established by staff and used to develop alternatives for the Gold Street Educational Center.

- Develop an educational center at the Gold Street parcel that serves to highlight Alviso's history and close association with the Guadalupe River and South San Francisco Bay.
- Provide a link to recreation trails in the vicinity of the site.
- Work closely with representatives of the Alviso community to define the features of the educational center, particularly the content of historical and/or interpretive displays.

Project Alternatives

Three alternatives have been identified and evaluated to meet the project objectives:

- Alternative 1: Educational Center
- Alternative 2: Educational Center with Additional Facilities
- Alternative 3: Eco-Friendly Educational Center w/ Facilities

[1] Government Policies of the Board of Directors, 1999.

Public Outreach

Community input and support for project alternatives has been actively sought during the planning phase of this project. District staff has attended monthly meetings of the Alviso Water Task Force in Alviso to provide project progress updates and engage the members in the project development process and has worked with a subcommittee of the Task Force on project details. District staff provided site visits for interested members to other educational centers in the County that the District has either constructed or entered into partnership with other entities to establish.

Staff-Recommended Alternative

The proposed project alternatives were evaluated based on the following criteria: achieving project objectives, project completion timeline, cost-effectiveness, enhancement and aesthetics, community preference, and similarity to other District-sponsored educational centers. Alternative 1 best meets the criteria and is the staff- recommended alternative.

The staff-recommended Alternative 1, shown in Figure 1, would include: a parking area, decomposed granite trails, interpretive signage, a gazebo, a drinking fountain, split-rail fencing, and landscaping with a mixture of native shrubs and trees. The educational center would provide a link to adjacent recreation trails, and an opportunity to educate the public about the history of Alviso in association with the Guadalupe River, and the District's mission of water supply, water conservation, flood protection, and watershed stewardship.

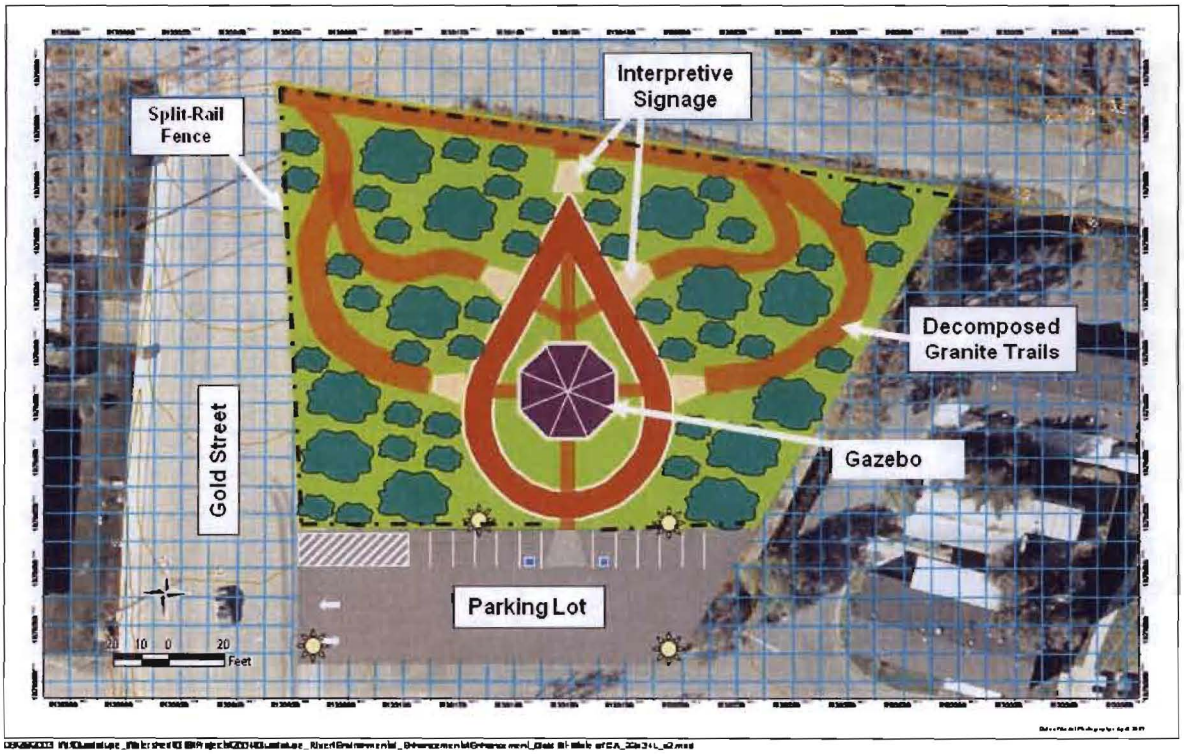


Figure 1. Conceptual Layout of Staff-Recommended Alternative (Alternative 1)
Gold Street Educational Center

Capital Costs

Table 1 presents the estimated planning, design, and construction costs for the staff-recommended alternative. The current estimated cost to complete construction is approximately $1.1 million.

Table 1. Estimated Capital Costs for Staff-Recommended Alternative

Project Elements	Estimated Capital Costs (2008 $)
Complete Planning Phase	$ 270,000
Complete Design Phase and obtain Permits	$ 200,000
Construction cost*	$650,000
TOTAL	**$1,120,000**

*Includes 20% contingency

Long-Term Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Costs

Long-term O&M costs are estimated at $12,000 per year, and would include costs for District maintenance crews to regularly inspect the site, remove graffiti, trash, and litter, and maintain the trails and landscaped areas.

Project Financing

The proposed project would be financed by the Watershed and Stream Stewardship Fund. Staff would also seek grant opportunities to reduce the District's capital costs for the Gold Street Educational Center. Potential sources of grants identified to date include Lowe's (a home improvement retailer) Outdoor Classroom Grant Program; the Land and Water Conservation Fund, funded by California State Department of Parks and Recreation; and the Public Access Program funded through the California Wildlife Conservation Board.

Rights of Way for Project Construction

In 2004 staff initiated negotiations with the State Lands Commission to acquire the Gold Street parcel for an educational center. The Commission advised that the Gold Street parcel is a "sovereign tide and submerged land" and that sale of such lands is prohibited under Article X of the State Lands Commission. However, the Commission does possess the authority to terminate the state's sovereign interests through an exchange process under very strict conditions. Further discussion with the Commission indicated that the easier method for the District's acquisition of an interest in the parcel would be to lease the land.

Upon completion of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis and documentation process for the project, staff would negotiate a long-term lease agreement for the Gold Street parcel with the State Lands Commission.

Implementation of Staff-Recommended Project

If the Board of Directors directs staff to proceed with project work, the following milestones have been developed as the next steps toward project implementation:

- Complete CEQA analysis and draft documentation: March 2009
- Board certifies CEQA document: June 2009
- Complete permit acquisition and design plans and specifications: September 2009
- Board approves plans and specifications and authorizes bidding for construction: October 2009
- Initiate construction: December 2009

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Project History

On July 9, 2002, the Board certified the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and adopted the Final Engineer's Report for the Lower Guadalupe River Flood Protection Project (LGRP). At that time the Board requested that staff further evaluate the feasibility of specific environmental enhancement opportunities and other opportunities that may provide recreational benefits to the community.

On November 18, 2002, the Board approved the project design plans and specifications, exclusive of any additional recreational and environmental features, and authorized staff to advertise the LGRP.

On November 19, 2002, staff presented an analysis of the following potential recreational and environmental enhancement opportunities:

1. Old Cannery Parcel Project – Recreational and environmental features
2. Gold Street Parcel Project – Recreational and environmental features
3. Ulistac Property levee setback Project – Environmental features
4. Alviso Slough Vegetation and Sediment Removal Project – Recreational features
5. Pedestrian and Bicycle Path Feasibility Study – Recreational features

After discussion, the Board determined that proposed enhancements 1, 2, and 4 were appropriate for further evaluation, and directed staff to develop implementation and funding plans for Board consideration.

On February 18, 2003, staff presented to the Board an implementation and funding plan for projects 1, 2, and 4. The Board directed staff to seek potential partners for Projects 1 (Old Cannery Parcel Project) and 2 (Gold Street Parcel Project), and present a conceptual plan for implementing the project for the Board's consideration.

Staff presented the conceptual plan for Project 2 (Gold Street Parcel project) to the Board on June 17, 2003 and July 8, 2003. The project proposed the development of recreational and environmental features at the Gold Street Parcel. The recreational features would include benches and incorporate trailside interpretive displays. The environmental features would include landscaping with native vegetation, and a small parking area of 10-12 spaces that would allow the site to serve as a staging area for users of the planned trail to be located along the levee immediately across the river.

At the July 8, 2003 meeting, staff informed the Board that it was pursuing a grant to cover 50 percent of the project cost. Following discussion, the Board directed staff to initiate a new capital project. The Board also approved an application to the Coastal Conservancy Access Grants program for the Gold Street parcel project. Upon submitting the application to the Coastal Conservancy, staff was informed that a grant request could not be considered until all planning

and CEQA documents were completed. Subsequently, staff was advised that this project would likely not be considered a strong candidate for grant funding from this program.

Project Location and Setting

Figure 2 presents a general location map of Alviso and the Guadalupe River/Alviso Slough. An aerial photo of the Gold Street parcel identified for this enhancement project is shown in Figure 3. The site is approximately one-half acre in size, and is bordered to the north by the Guadalupe River and adjacent levee, to the west by Gold Street, and to the south and east by Summerset Mobile Estates. The site is owned by the California State Lands Commission and is currently vacant and undeveloped.



Figure 2. Location Map of Gold Street Educational Center



Figure 3. Aerial View of Gold Street Parcel

A storage yard is located north of the site across the Guadalupe River. The property to the west of the Gold Street parcel is currently being developed for commercial purposes. Commercial buildings and associated parking lots are located along Gold Street to the south of the subject parcel. The parcel was used in 2002-2004 by the District as a construction staging area for the Lower Guadalupe River Flood Protection Project, and, more recently, a staging area for the commercial development on the west side of Gold Street.

As part of early project planning, both Phase I and Phase II Hazardous Substance Liability Assessments (HSLA) were performed on the Gold Street parcel (Kleinfelder 2006A and 2006B). The assessments noted that the parcel is a part of the 550-acre South Bay Asbestos Superfund Site, which was listed on U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) National Priority List (NPL) in 1986. Many remedial actions were implemented between 1986 and 1998 to remove asbestos-laden soils from levees and truck yards in Alviso, and capping them with clean soils.

The Gold Street parcel is located near one of the former landfills where, according to EPA reports (EPA 2005), asbestos-containing pipes were buried. The depth to groundwater at the Gold Street site is approximately 4 feet below the ground surface. Both soil and groundwater samples were collected as part of the Phase II HSLA investigation.

Analysis of the soil samples revealed that the site soil is not considered hazardous, and no special soil management requirements appear to be necessary for the site (Kleinfelder, 2006B). Groundwater samples indicated that levels of certain organochloride pesticides, petroleum hydrocarbons, copper, and mercury exceed the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board's Environmental Screening Levels (ESL's). The chemicals detected in the groundwater could impact construction activities on the site if groundwater is encountered during these activities.

Project Objectives

The following project objectives were established by staff and used to develop alternatives for the Gold Street Educational Center.

- Develop an educational center at the Gold Street parcel that serves to highlight Alviso's history and close association with the Guadalupe River and South San Francisco Bay.
- Provide a link to recreation trails in the vicinity of the site.
- Work closely with representatives of the Alviso community to define the features of the educational center, particularly the content of historical and/or interpretive displays.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

Staff met with members of the Alviso Water Task Force several times during the initial planning work for this project. One meeting consisted of a tour of other educational centers that had been constructed by the District or for which the District had entered into a partnership with another entity to construct. Subsequent meetings were held to solicit community input on the desired function and features of an educational center at the Gold Street parcel. The development of three possible project alternatives, described in the following paragraphs, was based on the project objectives and public input.

Alternative 1 – Educational Center

A conceptual plan of Alternative 1 is shown in Figure 4. This alternative would contain the following elements:

- Paved parking lot for 10-12 cars
- Decomposed granite trails
- Interpretive signage
- Gazebo
- Drinking fountain
- Split-rail fencing along perimeter
- Landscaping with a mixture of native shrubs and trees

Alternative 1 would provide a link to adjacent recreation trails and an opportunity to educate the public about the history of Alviso in association with the Guadalupe River, and the District's mission of water supply, water conservation, flood protection, and watershed stewardship.

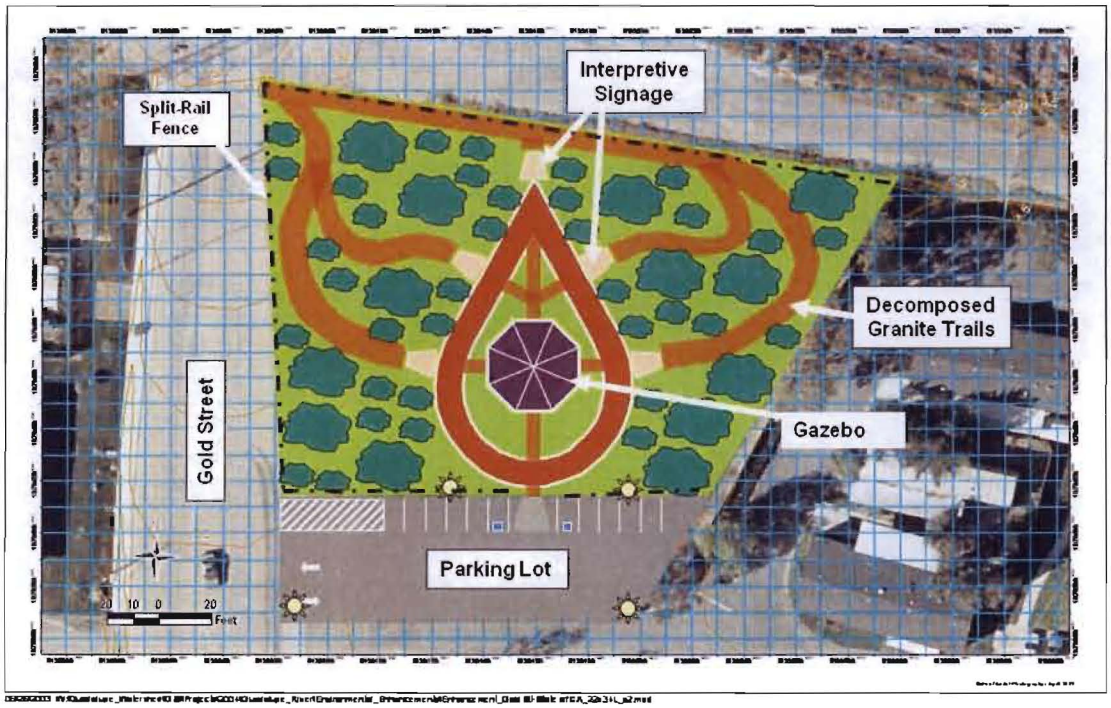


Figure 4. Alternative 1 Conceptual Plan – Gold Street Educational Center

Alternative 2 – Educational Center w/ Facilities

Alternative 2 would contain all the features of Alternative 1 and would add:

- Restroom facilities/drinking fountain
- Lighting throughout the site
- Metal gate across parking lot entrance

A schematic of Alternative 2 is shown in Figure 5. It is based on the same general schematic as shown in Figure 4 for Alternative 1, with the added features of a restroom facility at the northeast corner of the parking area, split rail fencing, a gated parking lot entrance, and lighting throughout the site.

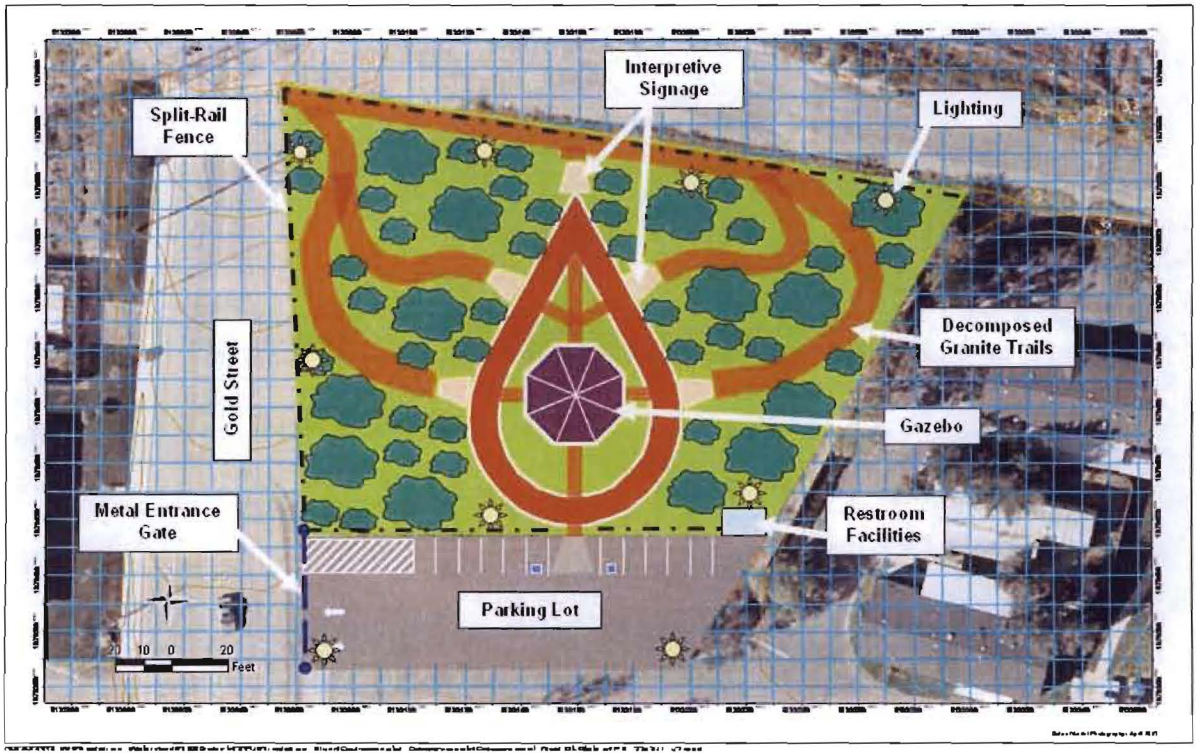


Figure 5. Alternative 2 Conceptual Plan – Gold Street Educational Center

Alternative 3 – Eco-friendly Educational Center w/ Facilities

Based on the community input received to date, staff has developed Alternative 3, which would contain all the features of Alternative 2 and would add:

- Recycled water for landscape irrigation and toilet flushing.
- Solar cell installation and operation to offset electrical use by onsite lighting

Figure 6 presents a schematic of Alternative 3. As shown in the figure, a recycled water pipeline would have to be installed in Gold Street to provide recycled water to this site. The nearest existing recycled water line is located in Lafayette Street near its intersection with Yerba Buena Way, approximately one-half mile from the project site.

Figure 7 presents a schematic of the approximate 2,600 lineal feet of recycled water main that would be installed along Lafayette and Gold Streets to reach the proposed project site. Dual plumbing would be installed in the restroom facility to accommodate recycled water use. Recycled water could also be used for landscape irrigation. It is estimated that an average of 5,000 gallons of recycled water would be required daily for restroom use and landscape irrigation.

Solar cells would be mounted on the gazebo and/or restroom roofs to generate electricity and offset energy use by the lighting system.

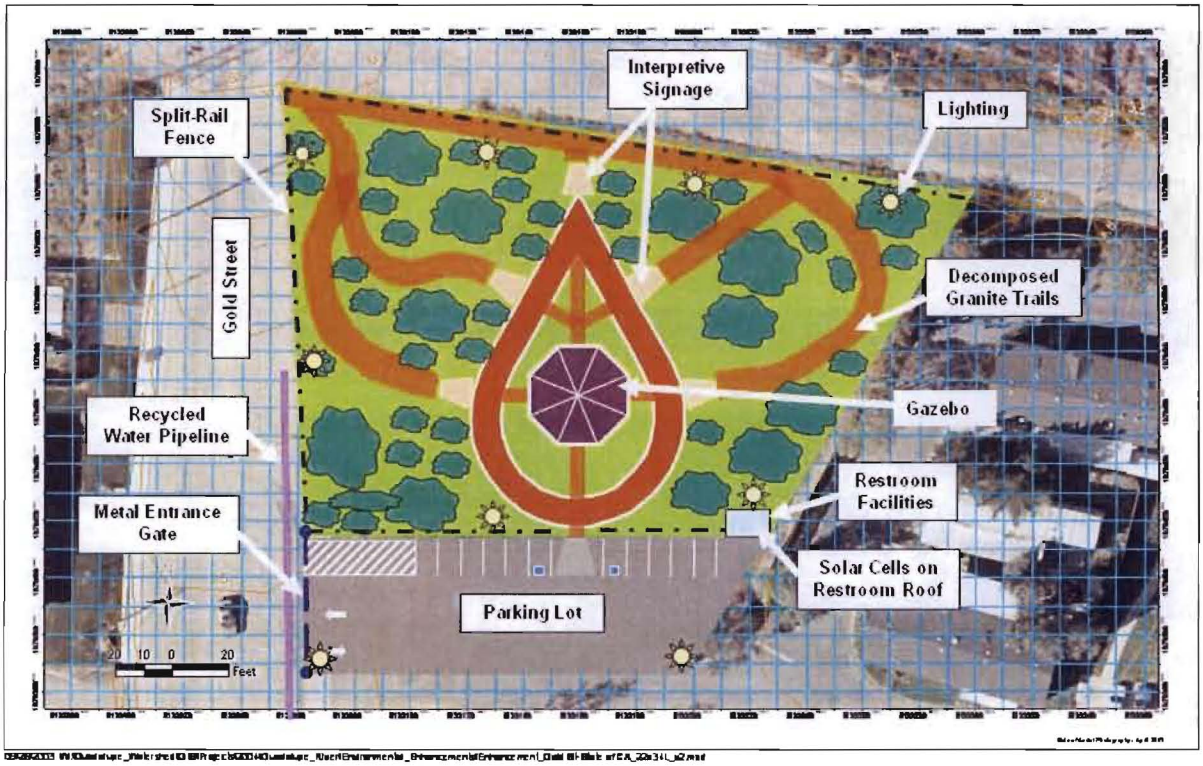


Figure 6. Alternative 3 Conceptual Plan – Gold Street Educational Center

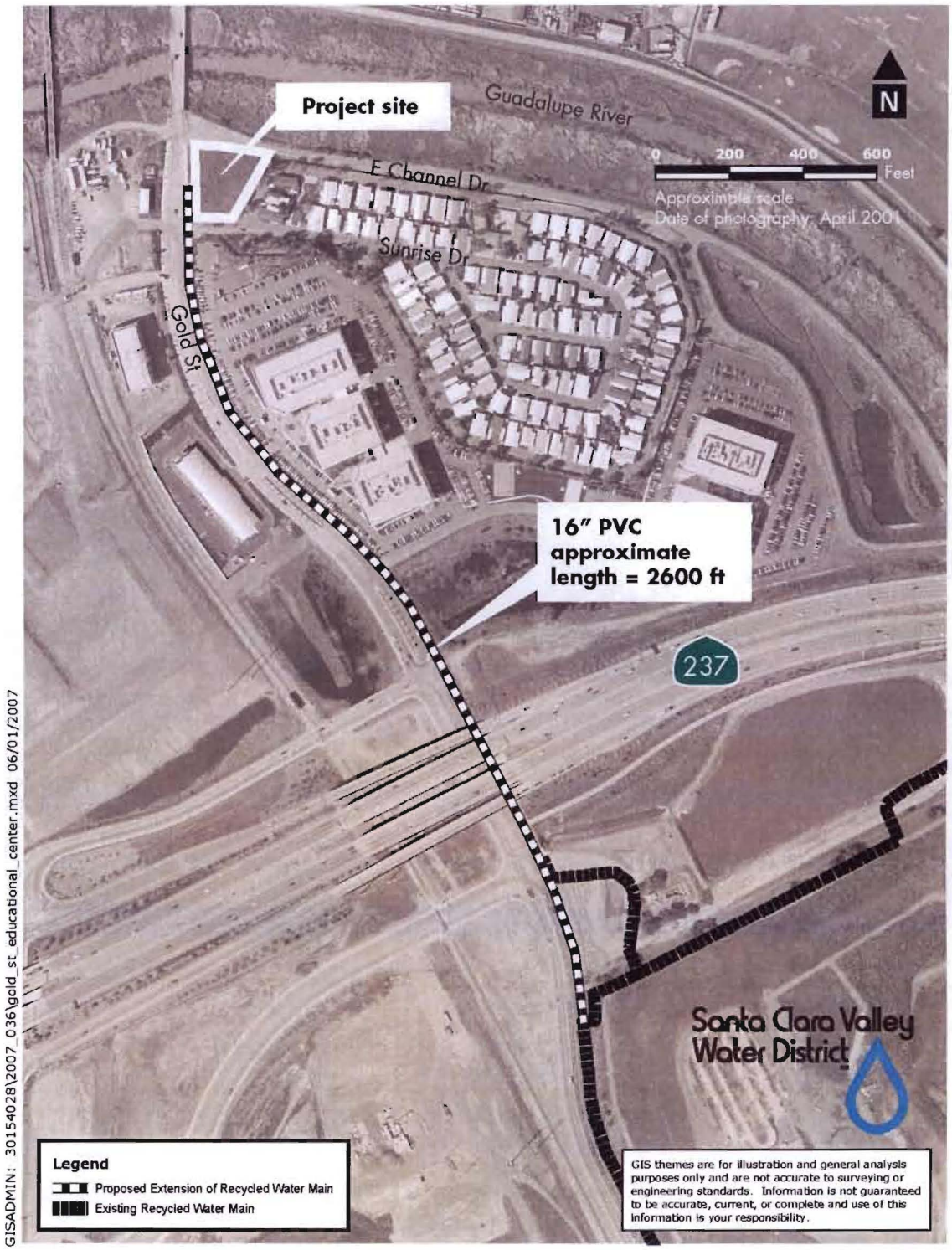


Figure 7. Schematic of Recycled Water Main Installation for Alternative 3

Figure 7 shows several commercial developments along Gold Street between Highway 237 and the project site. None of these were plumbed for internal dual use of water and recycled water when they were constructed. If the recycled water main were to be installed as part of Alternative 3, re-plumbing of the outdoor irrigation systems at these properties for recycled water use could be accomplished. However, the extent of landscaping is fairly limited on these sites, and would not significantly increase recycled water use in this area.

Alternative 3 would provide all the amenities and features of Alternatives 1 and 2, and would add an educational focus on the use of renewable energy and recycled water.

Alternative 4 – No Project

The "No Project" alternative assumes the parcel would remain in its existing condition and an educational center would not be built. The "No Project" alternative does not meet any of the project objectives and is eliminated from further consideration.

4. EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES

The three project alternatives described in Section 3 were evaluated based on the following criteria and weights for Environmental Enhancement projects, as established by the Board of Directors in their Ends Policy E-3.2.2[2]:

1. Meets project objectives – 15%
2. Timeline to complete construction – 5%
3. Likelihood of project success – 22.5%
4. Cost-Effectiveness – 15%
5. Geographic Distribution – 7.5%
6. Environmental Desirability – 22.5%
7. Community Involvement – 12.5%

The criterion of construction impacts to the community was also evaluated for each alternative.

To evaluate the alternatives for their cost-effectiveness, capital and long-term operations and maintenance costs were developed for each alternative, and are described below.

Capital Costs

Table 2 provides the results of planning-level cost estimates (2008 dollars) to complete planning, design, and construction for the previously-described Alternatives 1, 2, and 3. Alternative 1 would develop an educational center that closely mirrors the most recent educational center constructed by the District in the Coyote Watershed (Coyote Outdoor Classroom). Alternatives 2 and 3 would contain increasingly more features and amenities than Alternative 1.

Staff's cost estimates include ongoing public outreach efforts, especially during the design phase. The estimated construction costs incorporate the dramatic cost increases experienced over the past three years in the construction industry.

Long-Term Maintenance Costs

For Alternative 1, long-term operations would involve landscape maintenance and periodic trash removal that could be performed by District's maintenance staff or a contracted service. The ongoing maintenance of the Coyote Outdoor Classroom is performed by the District's Coyote and Uvas/Llagas Watershed Field Operations staff, at an estimated cost of $12,000 per year.

For Alternatives 2 and 3, the installation of restroom facilities and a locking gate for the parking lot would incur additional long-term maintenance and security costs for the project. District staff explored partnership opportunities with the Parks and Recreation Departments of both the City of San Jose and Santa Clara County. Both agencies indicated no desire to take on additional maintenance duties, as increasingly tighter budgets continue to strain the services they currently provide within their jurisdictions. If the District contracted for restroom maintenance and security services, the annual cost is estimated as $18,000.

[2] Ibid., 1999

Presented at the bottom of Table 2 are the estimated annual costs of maintenance and security for each of the alternatives. For Alternative 1, District maintenance crews or a hired landscape maintenance firm would provide vegetation management and periodic trash removal at an estimated cost of $12,000 per year. For Alternatives 2 and 3, the maintenance and security of the restroom facility and the parking lot gate would cost an additional $18,000 per year, for a total of approximately $30,000 per year.

Table 2. Gold Street Educational Center
Estimated Costs (2008 dollars) for Feasible Alternatives

Item	Alt. 1 Educational Center	Alt. 2 Ed. Center w/ Facilities	Alt. 3 Eco-Friendly Ed. Center
Planning			
Planning Study Report, CEQA document, Hazmat Investigation, Land Lease negotiations, Public Outreach	**270,000**	**335,000**	**440,000**
Design			
Design drawings	155,000	185,000	260,000
Specifications and Contract	25,000	35,000	50,000
Permits - Planning Permits, Building Permits, SJ Code Enforcement Permit, Rezoning Application, Encroachment Permits, Water or Sewer Connection Permits, Electrical Connection, others	20,000	30,000	40,000
Subtotal for Design	**200,000**	**250,000**	**350,000**
Construction			
Mobilization	20,000	20,000	20,000
Site Work/Excavation/Grading/Trails	110,000	110,000	110,000
Signage	50,000	50,000	50,000
Gazebo	280,000	280,000	280,000
Parking Lot	40,000	40,000	40,000
Water / Sewer Lines	10,000	20,000	20,000
Irrigation System	15,000	15,000	15,000
Landscaping	20,000	20,000	20,000
Restroom Facilities		110,000	110,000
Lighting	10,000	20,000	20,000
Split-Rail Fencing	10,000	10,000	10,000
Recycled Water Main			630,000
Solar Panels			60,000
Construction Management	85,000	100,000	200,000
Subtotal for Construction	**650,000**	**795,000**	**1,585,000**
Estimated Total Capital Cost (2008 $)	**$1,120,000**	**$1,380,000**	**$2,375,000**
Estimated Annual O&M Costs	**$12,000**	**$30,000**	**$30,000**

Table 3 provides staff's ranking of the three project alternatives based on the seven Board Policy criteria and weighting for environmental enhancement projects. The rankings ranged from 1 to 5, with 5 assigned when an alternative aligns very well with the intent of a criterion, 4 reflects good alignment, 3 is average alignment, 2 is poor alignment, and 1 is assigned when an alternative does not align with the intent of a criterion. A detailed discussion of the rankings assigned for each alternative and for each of the criteria follows.

1. Project Objectives - This criterion evaluates if an alternative meets the project objectives as described in Section 2. As shown in Table 3, each of the three alternatives meets the project objectives; thus, a ranking of 5 is assigned for all alternatives for this criterion.

2. Status of Proposed Project - This criterion evaluates the readiness of an alternative to be completed and also considers the length of time that may be required to complete the project. For Alternative 1, the estimated time to complete the project is 1 to 1-1/2 years. Adding some complexity to the project with additional facilities and features would result in a 2-year timeline for Alternative 2. With the addition of significant utility coordination work in Alternative 3 during the design phase, this alternative may require to 2 to 3 years to complete. Relative to each other, Alternative 1 is ranked as 5, Alternative 2 as a 4, and Alternative 3 as a 2.

3. Likelihood of Project Success - This criterion evaluates the probability of a project's success from the perspective of ease of obtaining permits, ease of construction, and acceptability by the public. This project is highly desired by the community and does not pose significant obstacles to completion. All three alternatives were ranked as 5 for this criterion.

4. Cost Effectiveness – This criterion evaluates how the capital and long-term costs of a project compare to the value of the delivered project. For capital costs, Alternative 1 ranks as the least costly alternative but still delivers an enhancement and a valuable educational setting for the Alviso community and its visitors, and is given a ranking of 5. Alternative 2 has greater capital costs due to additional facilities and features, and is given a ranking of 4. Alternative 3 is twice as costly as Alternative 1 and much more costly than Alternative 2; thus it is given a ranking of 2.

For long-term O&M costs, Alternative 1 is the least costly and is given a ranking of 5. Alternatives 2 and 3 both reflect higher long-term annual costs due to the maintenance and security requirements of the additional facilities and features; both are given a ranking of 3 for this criterion.

5. Geographic Distribution – This criterion evaluates if the project will be a benefit to a limited segment of the population, or an asset to the greater community of Santa Clara County. If constructed, any of the alternatives would provide an educational and trail linkage benefit to the greater Santa Clara County community; thus, a rating of 5 is assigned to each alternative.

Table 3. Ranking of Alternatives for Gold Street Educational Center

Board of Directors' Policy E-3.2.2 Enhancement Criteria	Weights as per Board Policy E-3.2.2	Alternative 1 Educational Center		Alternative 2 Educational Center w/ Facilities		Alternative 3 Eco-Friendly Educational Center w/ Facilities	
		Staff Rating*	Score	Staff Rating	Score	Staff Rating	Score
1. Project Objectives	**15.0**	5	*75*	5	*75*	5	*75*
2. Timeline to Complete Project	**5.0**	5	*25*	4	*20*	2	*10*
3. Likelihood of Project Success	**22.5**	5	*112.5*	5	*112.5*	5	*112.5*
4. Cost-Effectiveness							
a) Estimated capital costs	**8.0**	5	*40*	4	*32*	2	*16*
b) Long-Term O&M Costs	**7.0**	5	*35*	3	*21*	3	*21*
5. Geographic Distribution	**7.5**	5	*37.5*	5	*37.5*	5	*37.5*
6. Environmental Desirability							
a) Project is an enhancement	**4.5**	5	*22.5*	5	*22.5*	5	*22.5*
b) Improves or accommodates public access	**4.5**	5	*22.5*	5	*22.5*	5	*22.5*
c) Enhances recreational/education opportunities	**4.5**	5	*22.5*	5	*22.5*	5	*22.5*
d) Maintains and enhances aesthetic values of the river corridor	**4.5**	4	*18*	3	*13.5*	3	*13.5*
e) Risk of encountering hazardous materials	**4.5**	5	*22.5*	3	*13.5*	3	*13.5*
7. Community Involvement (Preference)	**12.5**	2	*25*	4	*50*	5	*62.5*
8. Construction Impacts to Community		Low		Low		Med	
TOTALS**	**100**		**458**		**443**		**429**
Overall Ranking			**1**		**2**		**3**

* Staff rating ranged from 5 to 1; 5 = alternative aligns very well with the intent of a criterion; 4 = good; 3 = average; 2 = poor; 1 = alternative does not align with the intent of the criterion.
**Maximum possible total score is 500.

6. Environmental Desirability – There are several sub-criteria associated with this issue and the rankings for each alternative are briefly described below:

6a. *Enhancement* All three alternatives would provide an enhanced use of the Gold Street parcel and are each given a ranking of 5.

6b. *Improves or accommodates public access* All three alternatives would improve or accommodate public access to the Guadalupe River levee and bike trails and are thus each given a ranking of 5.

6c. *Enhances recreational/educational opportunities* All three alternatives meet this criteria and are each given a ranking of 5.

6d. *Maintains and enhances aesthetic values of the river corridor* Alternative 1 is given a ranking of 4 because the gazebo structure may become an attractive nuisance in the area – a target for graffiti or other undesirable activities. Alternatives 2 and 3 are given a ranking of 3 because the addition of restroom facilities may further increase the site's attractiveness for nuisance activities.

6e. *Risk of encountering hazardous materials* As described earlier in the report, hazardous materials investigations conducted to date at the site indicate that site soils are not contaminated, and no remedial actions appear to be required during construction. Analysis of groundwater, however, indicated high concentrations of certain pesticides, petroleum hydrocarbons, and metals. Since groundwater is located about 4 feet below the surface, it would likely be encountered during site trenching for installation of potable water and sewer lines to serve the restroom facility (Alternatives 2 and 3), and the trench would have to be dewatered to lay the pipes. It is likely that additional permits would have to be obtained and/or additional procedures implemented during construction to minimize hazards to construction workers coming into contact with the groundwater, and to provide treatment to the pumped water prior to discharging it to the sewer system.

Since Alternative 1 would not require significant excavation or grading, it is given a ranking of 5. Alternatives 2 and 3 may present additional challenges to ease of construction and worker safety, and are thus given a ranking of 3.

7. Community Involvement – This criterion evaluates the community's input and preferences for the proposed project. Members of the Alviso Water Task Force have strongly expressed a desire for an educational center with drinking water and restroom facilities, as well as other features, such as split-rail fencing around the perimeter, a locking metal gate, and lighting throughout the site. A strong interest was also expressed in having the site be a model of resource efficiency (use of recycled water) and use of renewable energy (solar power). Thus, Alternative 1 was given a ranking of 2, Alternative 2 a ranking of 4, and Alternative 3 a ranking of 5 with regards to community preference.

8. Construction Impacts to Community – This criterion evaluates the relative impacts of construction on the surrounding community. Since it is not one of the Board Ends Policy E-3.2.2 criteria, it is not given any weighting. The ranking is identified as "Low" construction impacts for Alternatives 1 and 2, since the construction impacts would be contained mostly on or near the site. Alternative 3 would generate more traffic disruption for the installation of the recycled water main pipeline, which would impact a greater number of people, and is thus given a ranking of "Medium".

Based on the Board Policy E-3.2.2 criteria and weighting, and a ranking range of 1 to 5, the maximum possible total for any alternative would be 500. As seen in Table 3, Alternative 1 ranks the highest, with a total score of 458; Alternative 2 ranks as the second highest, with a score of 443, and Alternative 3 ranks as the lowest at 429. Based on the alternatives evaluation and ranking process, staff has identified Alternative 1 to be recommended for the Gold Street Educational Center.

5. STAFF-RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE

Based on the evaluation and ranking of the three project alternatives as presented in Section 4, staff recommends Alternative 1 for the Gold Street Educational Center project. Alternative 1 is the most cost-effective of the alternatives, both from a capital investment and long-term O&M perspective. Alternative 1 also mirrors the most recent educational center constructed by the District (Coyote Outdoor Classroom).

Project Financing

The proposed project would be financed by the Watershed and Stream Stewardship Fund. Staff would also seek grant opportunities to reduce the District's capital costs for the Gold Street Educational Center. Potential sources of grants identified to date include Lowe's (a home improvement retailer) Outdoor Classroom Grant Program; the Land and Water Conservation Fund, funded by California State Department of Parks and Recreation; and the Public Access Program funded through the California Wildlife Conservation Board.

Rights of Way for Project Construction

In 2004 staff initiated negotiations with the State Lands Commission to acquire the Gold Street parcel for an educational center. The Commission advised that the Gold Street parcel is a "sovereign tide and submerged land" and that sale of such lands is prohibited under Article X of the State Lands Commission. However, the Commission does possess the authority to terminate the state's sovereign interests through an exchange process under very strict conditions. Further discussion with the Commission indicated that the easier method for the District's acquisition of an interest in the parcel would be to lease the land.

Upon completion of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis and documentation for the project, staff would negotiate a long-term lease agreement for the Gold Street parcel with the State Lands Commission.

Implementation of Staff-Recommended Project

If the Board of Directors directs staff to proceed with the project work, the following milestones have been developed as the next steps toward project implementation:

- Complete CEQA analysis and draft documentation: March 2009
- Board certification of CEQA document: June 2009
- Complete permit acquisition and design plans and specifications: September 2009
- Board approval of plans and specifications/authorization to bid for construction: October 2009
- Initiate construction: December 2009

References

Kleinfelder (May 2006A). Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, Gold Street Education Center, Alviso California.

Kleinfelder (July 2006B). Final Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) for Gold Street Educational Center, Alviso, California.